

The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1940

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which are of local interest and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be received before noon, Wednesday. The right is reserved, however, to make such editorial changes in the copy as are deemed necessary in the style of the paper or to make such changes in the copy as are deemed necessary in the style of the paper or to make such changes in the copy as are deemed necessary in the style of the paper.

Traveling Governors

When Wilbur M. Brucker was governor of the State of Michigan he traveled extensively about the State, visiting the people of Michigan in their homes, in their schools, in their churches, in their clubs, in their organizations great and small. When he left his office he probably had made a new high record in talks before the people of Michigan while he was Governor. Indeed, this newspaper doubts him the "Champion Governor." During the twenty-two months that retiring Governor Luren D. Dickinson was on the job in Lansing, he, too, traveled extensively about the State, and is presumed to have made more talks before more people than even Mr. Brucker.

Now, come a new governor, January 1st, Murray D. Van Wagoner who, for the past eight years, has been Michigan's Highway Commissioner. Knowing something of the extensive traveling of Mr. Van Wagoner and his ability to make continuous contact with the people, we won't be surprised if at the end of his first two year term he piles up a greater record in public speeches than did either Governor Dickinson or former Governor Brucker. You see, folks, getting elected is one thing and getting re-elected is another, though both require the same type of continuous contact with the people who, at election time, make or unmake public officials.

Football Has Brains, Too!

College football stars are generally conceived to be rugged physical giants who do well on the gridiron, but do not so well in the classroom. One evening last week, at the local Lions Club annual banquet for Baldwin high school players, Forest Evans, star quarterback of the University of Michigan team, was the guest speaker. His portion of the program easily revealed that his abilities in the realm of the intellectual match his prowess on the football field. He spoke with poise, with profound meaning, personal conviction, with him also brought out evidence that he has a serious attitude toward life, and intends upon graduation in February to get into work that may reward him in later life. His refusal to play professional football with the Washington Redskins, though they would pay him \$3,000 for three months of work next fall, suggests that Mr. Evans knows something of ultimate values. We prophesy that Mr. Evans, continuing his present habit, will become a valuable citizen of these United States.

Liquor Control Needs Control

We are inclined to agree with those who hold that Michigan's Liquor Control Commission should center its executive action and responsibility in one man, paid on a full-time basis; this man should then be responsible to a Commission of men, and perhaps women, who serve voluntarily, and are in turn responsible to the Governor who appoints them. Under the present system of three full-time, paid Commissioners, there evidently is not that centralized authority necessary to make for sound administration of the State's liquor affairs; this is illustrated in the recent indictment against Fred Ehrmann, executive secretary of the Liquor Control Commission. With proper management, how could Mr. Ehrmann, or any other man in his position ever wander so far afield as to be indicted by the federal government?

Political Names in Public Places

Now that Mr. G. Donald Kennedy is our new State Highway Commissioner, the time has come for the Legislature to restrict the practice of plastering politicians' names over state property. Ever roadside tables bore the signature of Mr. Van Wagoner, while it has been the practice to waste the state's money in putting gold leaf on store windows advertising that Harry Kelly or some one else is secretary of state.

It Begins to Look as Though most of the Italians who are fighting in Albania will be out of the trenches by Christmas—at the rate the Greeks are taking them to town. No doubt they will have most of them in concentration camps before the turn of the year.

Commendable, of course, is the attitude of those local people who wish to obtain more funds for the current operation of the Birmingham public schools. Their plan to ask the voters of this school district for an increased tax levy next June, to last five years, is equally commendable, at least in theory; but whether they will be able to win such approval from not less than two-thirds of the people who vote at an election, is a horse of another color. Plenty of people are always willing to get on any hand-woman of improved public service—until the hat is passed. The real solution of the problem is, in our opinion, a mass demand on State government to economize on many of the State's expenditures, then divert some of these savings to the support of the school system. That's where the real public pressure ought to be exerted—else the tax burden will eventually demoralize the economy of society.

Knudsen Is the Man!

A note of solemn warning was sounded last week when William S. Knudsen, Industrial Defense Commissioner, declared that the manufacturer of vital armament items in the United States is lagging as much as 30% behind schedule. Mr. Knudsen, one of our greatest industrialists in the United States, knows that the industrial capacity of American industry, when properly harnessed and directed, can produce in the shortest period of time more of the implements of defense than any other nation on earth. It is to be hoped that President Roosevelt will recognize this condition and appoint either Mr. Knudsen or some other outstanding industrialist as chairman of the nation's defense commission, thus placing one man who knows what he wants to do, in charge of this most vital national activity.

Voluntary Work Best

We have always believed that a good share of the best work done in this world is performed on a voluntary basis. Further evidence of this fact is seen in B'nai B'rith's annual Red Cross Roll Call, when this year again went over the top—contributing a total of \$2,801.79—exceeding last year's total by more than \$1,000.00. A total of 1615 people made this contribution for 1940. Humanity's support of the Red Cross proves that an altruistic and ideal cause, properly directed to the attention of the people, will win their wholehearted support, and suggests that needs not more idealistic than this one need more idealistic technique of getting human beings to cooperate in worthwhile efforts.

Depends On Whose Tooth Is Aching

There is a classical definition of what constitutes man in this statement, "When a dog bites a man that is not news; but if a man bites a dog, that is news." Illustrating this point further, when the average individual has a tooth that needs extracting, that is news only to himself. When a certain lady and her husband, who are a certain family, have a tooth extracted, that is news only to them. When a certain family, who are a certain family, have a tooth extracted, that is news only to them. When a certain family, who are a certain family, have a tooth extracted, that is news only to them.

A Job For Luren

We note that eighty-one year old Governor, Luren D. Dickinson, term expires January 1st, is open for a new job—one with epic and variety in it. We suggest to incoming Governor Murray D. Van Wagoner that he create a Commission on Public Morals, and that he appoint Mr. Dickinson Commissioner. This will give the venerable Charlotte Center an opportunity to render further service to the State of Michigan, since it is well known that Mr. Dickinson has spent most of his life counseling against sin. The result of Mr. Dickinson's commission would be to uplift the morals of the citizens of Michigan.

Van Wagoner Can Be Re-elected

We make this political prophecy relative to the next Michigan election for a Governor: if Murray D. Van Wagoner, the new Governor, takes office January 1, does a practical and economic job during his first year and can win the re-election against any Republican, we know that most of the Republicans of Michigan are concerned chiefly with the kind of good government they get, and not particularly about who gives it to them. This goes for private citizens as well as many Republican newspaper editors in Michigan.

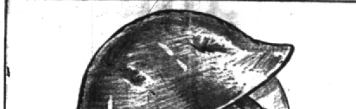
Millions of Dollars

The making and sale of liquor is big business with two capital B's. November sales in Michigan exceeded \$3,500,000 of which 51 cents went in Detroit. Package sales through private dealers accounted for 58 per cent of the state sales; licenses (clubs, taverns, etc.) 30 per cent, while the Detroit sales through private dealers accounted for 15 per cent.

APPROXIMATELY \$415,000.00 of money obtained from Washington has been used by Birmingham in the past six years to extend its sewer water facilities. While this sum of money appears as an outright grant from Washington, it will have to be raised in taxes, and you may rest assured that you who live in this community will pay more into the federal treasury than you get out of it.

EDUCATION IS A COSTLY thing. Costly both to those who get it the realistic way; costly to parents who keep their offspring in school and college.

JOB WELL DONE



THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications from its readers. All communications must be signed, and must be in the care of the Editor, not later than the following Thursday.

Voluntary Control

It was seven years ago that the eighteenth amendment was passed, and the liquor distillers have yet to solve the problem of prohibition through voluntary control.

Both Parties

It is common law custom not to imply guilt until the accused has been convicted, and the innocence of a defendant is likewise assumed until proof and jury decide otherwise.

Dry Sentiment

A recent survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion, headed by Dr. George Gallup, revealed that dry sentiment has increased sharply in the past year or so. The trend toward prohibition is still to be crystallized.

Defends War Theme of High School Dance

Editor, The Eccentric: I read your editorial in last Thursday's paper up the "War Theme" and on behalf of the student body and the faculty I sincerely write this reply.

I wish to assure you that the military theme used at our dance was not adopted lightly. Much grave thought and consideration were given to the theme, and we were finally unanimously agreed by the students and faculty to go into the theme, and we were finally unanimously agreed by the students and faculty to go into the theme, and we were finally unanimously agreed by the students and faculty to go into the theme.

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Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

THE SUPREME COURT RULES

THIS observer is heartily in accord with the recent Michigan Supreme Court decision which has tended to serve a worthy purpose, to wit, to help the farmer get more for the milk produced on his farm, still within the entering wedge of an economic practice which bodes evil for America.

I still believe in the system of private enterprise—the so-called capitalist system. So do a lot of other people, but there are many of our staunchest capitalists who don't know what capitalism is or what its rules are. They do know the rules, many of our most conservative friends are not willing to play the game according to them.

The milk market is set up by a state board with the power to fix the price which distributors had to pay farmers for their milk. It also had the power to set the price at which retailers could sell the milk. To make matters worse, the board was composed of farmers and distributors, with just one man representing "consumers," the entire public. The State Supreme Court ruled the law on the grounds that all but one of the board members were financially interested in the prices they set.

I am not opposed to the farmers getting a fair price for products, but I think it is unwise for the State to step in and fix the price. If that is done, why not have the state fix the price for wheat, potatoes, beef, and the rest?

By the same token, why not have a law passed which would require the Eccentric to print its news at a price fixed by the state? If that is done, why not have the state fix the price for the printing of this paper? If that is done, why not have the state fix the price for the printing of this paper?

When you get through, you would have capitalism anywhere, and the Eccentric would be a fair price for everything. The result was such a tremendous restriction on trade and enterprise that people lived in abject poverty. Then came the commercial revolution, and the restrictions were thrown off; trade was made free and a new Europe and America came into being.

The Essence of Capitalism. Free trade brought a huge increase in production throughout the world because free trade takes advantage of specialization. That means that people and cities and countries produce those things which they are best fitted to produce, and exchange them for the products of other people. The United States exchanges wheat for Cuban sugar because each country is best suited to produce what it produces. In the early days, every family produced everything it needed, making its own shoes and clothing. Then one family became expert in shoe making, and became efficient and by exchange one with the other, all profited. That is the essence of a commercial and industrial civilization—specialization plus free exchange.

But free exchange depends on free prices. That is, prices must be allowed to fluctuate without restraint, for price movements are the great regulators of the capitalist system. When prices are raised too many cattle, the market is flooded and the farmer has to raise a lower price for the cattle. But as the price falls, the farmer is moved to keep his animals off the market, and then prices tend to rise again.

Remember Turkey Prices? (Gosh, used to be very scarce for them. High prices meant high profits, and that encouraged others to go into the business, and the result that production jumped and now turkeys are cheaper. Remember when turkeys were scarce, they were a pound? The same thing happened in this field.

But let us say that the turkey growers had complained that 45 cents a pound was a fair price for their turkeys, and they persuaded the legislature to pass a law pegging the price at that point. If that had happened, people would still be eating chicken and goose at Thanksgiving and only the well-to-do would be eating turkey.

As prices move up and down, in accordance with supply and demand, the economic system is regulated more or less automatically, without the taxpayers having to pay a cent more or less to do it.

The Trouble Today. But the trouble with our economic system today is that trade and prices are not altogether free. We have monopolies of all kinds; competition is dulled and prices are fixed by big business in their efforts to keep up prices and make more money. As new machines and processes are introduced into the productive process, the saving is not shared with the consumer through a lowered price; rather the price is kept up and the manufacturer pockets the extra profit.

Prices are sticky and our economic machine is gummed. That is why there is not a job for everybody that is out of the productive process, why there are so many reasons for depression. The people who are poor are the people who don't know it, for the schools don't teach much economics, vital as it is.

And that is why, as I have noted, when the Supreme Court threw out that monstrous price-fixing law, the NRA, the Michigan Milk Marketing Law was not as bad, but it could have led to worse things. Thurnham Arnold and his associates—the men who are trying to break up the price-fixers and monopolists, which is the very essence of the American business system—are the real heroes of the Roosevelt administration.

He Brought Peace. He brought peace, that Babe who first felt the stable air of a year ago. He brought peace to kneeling shepherd and to crown there.

And to Mary's trembling arms a peace how radiant fell! And Joseph and that place and land a luminous calm encircle.

He brought peace. And still on the world its fragrance pours; Yet it is not peace the world gives. That springs from the loins of its roots arise in the heart—It's in the least soul's span; The peace that He gives proceeds from Love of God and love for man!

LAWRENCE W. KILEY
3304 14-Mile Road

We Wonder, Too. Uncle Eli Podger, of Coon Center, recently paid the newspaper office one of his rare visits. Uncle Eli is getting along in years now and he does have a lot to say about that inquisitive little great-granddaughter of his.

In explaining that she is too bright for his aging old head to keep ahead of, he let slip this story:

One evening the little girl had been besieging him with an endless succession of questions all of which he tried to answer. And then just before the little miss asked, "Grandpa, Eli, were you in the nick?"

"Why, no," Uncle Eli explained smilingly. "Then," she asked, regarding him with her innocent wonder, "why turkeys, and they persuaded the weren't you drowned?"

—BEATRICE McDONALD